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1. Since about 1930, Glavsevmorput (Chief Administration of the Northern Sea Route) has been endeavoring to establish regular sea communications along the short Arctic route between Murmansk and the Bering Sea. This would serve to connect the various far northern regions of economic significance and also supplement any undertakings, either defensive or offensive, which the USSR might wish to pursue in the Arctic. The northern sea route has been constantly gaining in importance and has kept abreast of the remarkable industrial development of the Arctic regions. It has also constituted an incentive to develop further the Siberian inland waterways.

2. In developing the northern route, the Russians had to surmount the difficulty of maintaining a coal supply over the great distances between Murmansk and the Bering Sea ports. Only slightly less formidable was the problem of setting up general supply depots along the route. An absence of ports capable of carrying out ship repairs or receiving cargoes further complicated the task. It was also necessary, starting almost from scratch, to create a fleet suitable for service along this arduous route, to increase the number of meteorological stations, and to construct bases for iceberg reconnaissance aircraft.

3. Although the main objective of Glavsevmorput is generally taken to be the forging of a link between the White Sea and the Bering Sea, this agency has in actual practice concentrated upon the exploitation of the western Arctic coast between Murmansk and the Yenisei, with somewhat less emphasis on the territories reaching beyond the Yenisei to the mouth of the Lena. The economic importance of the Yenisei River and the relatively milder climatic conditions have favored this region over those territories further to the east.

4. The number of passages made over the entire length of the route from the White Sea to the Bering Sea by icebreakers between 1930 and 1937 increased as follows: 1 in 1930, 2 in 1932, 1 in 1933, 2 in 1934, 4 in 1935, 14 in 1936, and 31 in 1937. The number of vessels circulating in Arctic waters also rose:

1933 :	42 vessels representing	136,000 tons
1934 :	59 "	156,000 "
1935 :	60 "	230,000 "

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This large increase in tonnage with the addition of only one ship might be explained by the fact that some of the smaller vessels of the previous year were scrapped and replaced by larger ones.)

1936 : 64 vessels representing 275,300 tons
1937 : 115 " " 532,000 "

The cargoes of these ships consisted of food supplies and equipment for the inhabitants of the Arctic stations and the troops stationed there.

5. In addition to the regular liaison planes which flew between the Arctic stations, Glavsevmorput maintained 156 reconnaissance planes in 1937 for the spotting of bergs and floes. In that year the Russians maintained 20 all-weather airfields and 53 fields usable only from July to October. Fifty-six meteorological stations serving marine aviation were in liaison with 22 naval meteorological stations. It was estimated in 1937 that naval planes had put in 16,000 flying hours on behalf of Glavsevmorput in the course of the year.

6. As of the end of 1937 there were only three ports along the 3,800-mile route between Murmansk and the Bering Sea which had any sort of facilities: Port Dickson, which could repair only one ship at a time; Port Tiksi, with no repair facilities; and Providenie, without even a quay. Because of the lack of equipment, coaling was carried out by hand at points far too wide apart for convenience. Coal came from Spitzbergen and took up tonnage badly needed for supplying food and equipment to the Arctic stations. By 1938 the most urgent task of Glavsevmorput was the construction of ports with repair facilities, the development of coal mines nearer to the maritime route (in the vicinity of Port Dickson, Port Tiksi, and Chukotsk), and the installation of mechanized coaling apparatus at convenient ports. For the fulfillment of this program, Glavsevmorput had at its disposal approximately four and one-half billion dollars, 40,000 free employees, and approximately 500,000 forced laborers under NKVD control.

7. The Soviet Navy took a great interest in the achievements of Glavsevmorput and established in 1937 a special Far Northern Squadron consisting of:

1 minelaying cruiser of 2,900 tons
5 destroyers, each of approximately 2,000 tons
6 coastal patrol craft of 600 tons each
1 very small torpedo boat
20 gunboats
43 submarines representing a total of 20,000 tons

8. It is a common mistake to consider Port Dickson as the main Glavsevmorput center. While this port has been considerably developed, it is in no way a major base. The two key points in the Arctic maritime system are Arkhangel, for western traffic, and Magadan, for eastern and far eastern traffic.

9. It has been learned from semi-secret Glavsevmorput publications that in 1945 the overall figure for shipping in Arctic waters stood at approximately three million tons. In the summer of 1946 the following situation prevailed in the Arctic ports mentioned below:

a. Mezen: Two ships of 200 tons each on the slips.

b. Novy Port: One ship in the harbor, four undergoing repairs.

c. Magadan: Two icebreakers in the harbor, thirteen other ships, totalling 7,800 tons, on the slips.

d. Sukharnoe (Ambarchik): Five ships undergoing repairs.

e. Taimyrsk: Three ships, with a total tonnage of 3,750, undergoing repairs.

f. Komsomolsk: Seven icebreakers and an unknown number of other vessels, representing a total of 12,000 tons, in the harbor.

g. Port Dickson: Seven ships undergoing repairs.

h. Port Tiksi: Four ships undergoing repairs.

i. Arkhangel: Fourteen ships under construction.

J. Murmansk: Seven ships under construction.

Of the 21 ships under construction at Arkhangel and Murmansk, twelve, including three icebreakers, representing a total of 6,700 tons, were destined for use in the Arctic. At the Leningrad yards, a total of 17,000 tons of shipping, including seven gunboats, was under construction for Arctic use.

10. In addition to the above-mentioned ships which were in port, undergoing repairs or under construction during the summer of 1946, sixty-seven additional ships were positively identified as circulating between Mezen and the Bering Straits during this same period. Of these, the most important units were two icebreakers of 4,500 tons each and four 600-ton submarines, three of which were anchored in July at Port Dickson and one of which was at Novy Port. It was impossible to establish a figure for the total number of ships circulating in Arctic waters during the summer of 1946, since reports varied from 750 to 2,000. An indication of the number of convoys passing through this area is given by the fact that, between August and November 1945, seventeen convoys escorted by icebreakers reached Magadan from the Bering Sea. These seventeen convoys represented a total of 420,000 tons.

11. A considerable number of merchant ships in Arctic waters travel heavily armed. The merchant collier "Taimyrskaya Zvezda", 1,200 tons, carries four 107 mm. guns, three 37 mm. guns, eight anti-aircraft machine guns, and two heavy 152 mm. mortars. The crews of many Soviet Arctic merchantmen are armed with rifles, machine guns, and pistols.

Condition of Arctic Ports in 1946

12. Mezen is situated at the mouth of a river of the same name. The port is connected with the hinterland by a narrow-gauge railroad which joins the Sevzheldorog line running from Arkhangel via Ust Zybny (Zybna ?) toward the Kara Gulf. There are actually two lines running from Mezen--one in the direction of Ust Zybny(a) and the other toward Southern Russia. Comment: This last sentence would seem to contradict the sentence before it, which speaks only of a--i.e., one--railroad line.) The 50X1-HUM Mezen River, which is navigable during the summer and affords an excellent ice surface during the winter, is also used as a channel of communication.

13. In 1936, there were 3,000 free citizens in Mezen. Within a radius of thirty kilometers there were two GUMZ camps containing 9,000 political prisoners, and some of these deportees were employed at the port itself. The harbor was equipped with two cement quays, each 120 meters long, and two docks, each having an area of approximately 2,000 square meters and resting on supports

of earth and wood. The port was served by two shipbuilding yards consisting of wooden sheds and installations and by one yard with cement installations, which was nearing completion in 1946. Thus, Mezen was capable of repairing three small ships (up to 800 tons) at one time. The port also contained facilities for automatic coaling; reserve supplies of fuel oil, wood, and coal; and a number of fish-packing sheds.

14. During July 1946 the port of Mezen contained the following vessels:

45 fishing boats (one to four tons)
2 coast guard cutters
1 cargo vessel of 200 tons
3 sailing vessels (35 tons each) for the transporting of fish
2 wooden freighters (200 tons each)

15. Mezen contains a scientific station for polar investigation, to which is attached an icebreaker, a meteorological station, a seventeen-kilowatt radio transmitter, and an airfield seventeen kilometers out of town. The Mezen garrison in July 1946 consisted of 27 coast guardsmen, a battery of coast artillery troops, and the headquarters personnel of an MVD militia battalion.

a/f

16. Pustozersk, which lies on Pechora Bay, maintains contact with the interior by means of roads and, more important, inland waterways. A narrow-gauge railway has been under construction since 1940. The building was interrupted during the war, but was resumed in 1946. This railway line will connect Pustozersk with the Pechora mineral basin.

17. The town had 2,000 free inhabitants in 1946, but in the surrounding region there were 27 camps holding some 200,000 deportees under GUMZ administration. They were used to work the Pechora coalfields and the oil center of Oikhta.

18. As regards equipment, the port of Pustozersk is at only a preliminary stage of development. In 1946, one cement quay was under construction, two temporary wooden quays were in existence, and one favorably situated roadstead was at the disposal of incoming ships. Mechanical equipment for coaling has been installed, but there are no facilities for repairing ships--unless the damage be extremely slight. On the western shore of the Pechora estuary there lies a well-organized Soviet Navy base which is served by a tug/icebreaker and provides shelter for two submarines.

19. In 1946 there was a large stock in and around Pustozersk of some 250,000 tons of coal plus a large fuel oil reserve. The local authorities in their report to Moscow claimed to have double the actual amount of fuel on hand. Activity in this port in July 1946 involved the arrival of seventeen colliers and two oil-tankers. In addition to this, there was a lively traffic of fishing boats and fish transports bound for Arkhangel.

20. Pustozersk contains the following installations: one scientific station for polar investigation; one meteorological station; one radio transmitter; and an airfield for use by planes doing ice field reconnaissance work. Eleven kilometers south of Pustozersk and one kilometer from the Pechora River, there were important MVD militia barracks and the headquarters of a coastal defense unit.

a/f

21. Amderma lies some 50 miles to the east of Vaigach Island. It is a small port of 500 inhabitants, but serves as an important concentration area for deportees in the vicinity. The port appeared to be in a still very rudimentary condition in 1946, although there were signs that it might be developed considerably, particularly as it would probably be the terminus of the Sevzheldorog railway from Arkhangel across the Pechora mineral basin. There was only one quay of a temporary nature at Amderma in 1946, and there were no facilities for repairs. A stock of 20,000 tons of coal was maintained; it had been brought by sea from

Pustozersk. Fifteen kilometers to the east of the port there was a heavily-guarded submarine base.

22. Amderma is principally used for the export of fluorspar, 31,500 tons of which were produced in 1945. A narrow-gauge railway between the fluorspar mines and the port is under construction, but up to 1946 the mineral was hauled to the port by tractors. Mechanical equipment for the extraction of fluorine (sic) was delivered in 1945. Installations at Amderma consist of: a scientific polar investigation station, a meteorological station, a radio station, an airfield, and a tractor station.

23. Novy Port lies on the western shore of the Ob Gulf and represents one of the greatest polar achievments of recent years. The population is estimated at something over 10,000. It commands the exit to the sea of the first great forbidden zone of Northern Siberia, which contains almost 2,000,000 deportees. Novy Port is both a sea and river port. It has a large shipbuilding yard for ocean and river craft, numerous repair yards, and a dry dock belonging to the Soviet Navy. Novy Port has, furthermore, a large number of sheds and warehouses and a coal depot. The importance of the port is above all economic; but there is reason to believe that the activity there is of a military nature, because since 1945 access has become practically impossible.

24. In the summer of 1945, seventeen river tugs, fourteen seagoing vessels totalling some 5,000 tons, three river icebreakers, and one sea-going icebreaker were stationed in Novy Port. In the summer of 1946, traffic in the port was estimated at some 140,000 tons. Installations consist of several scientific polar investigation stations, with laboratories and an experimental institute; a meteorological station; a powerful transmitter; one airfield belonging to Glavsevmorput; and one military airfield. There are MVD militia headquarters and a Soviet Army command post in the town.

25. Port Dickson lies on Dickson Island, facing the Yenisei estuary. During the past ten years, this port has been developed to an extraordinary degree. It is considered the focal point of Soviet Arctic communications, but is also the port most vulnerable to attack in the entire region. The character of the port revolves around these two considerations.

26. Port installations are very modern. There are three 150-meter cement quays and one which is 110 meters long. Stocks of coal and heavy oil are protected by rocks. Coal is loaded mechanically after being hauled from mines on the island. There are facilities for the repair of four ships at a time, although dry dock facilities are limited to a tonnage of 2,300. The submarine base is equipped with three shelters which will hold six submarines not exceeding 700 tons each. The submarine base is well protected by a superstructure of rocks. Port Dickson itself consists of a poor fishing village and a small ultra-modern town whose cement buildings are equipped with very deep shelters.

27. Three icebreakers are permanently stationed in Port Dickson, which is extremely active from July until the end of September. The greater part of the traffic is westbound (Novy Port, Murmansk, Arkhangel) and in the direction of Igarka, up the Yenisei. Much less traffic--but also of great importance in the eyes of the authorities--is in the direction of the Bering Sea. In all, during the summer of 1946, a total of over a million tons of shipping passed through Port Dickson, a figure which compares favorably with the statistics of some of the larger ports of the USSR. Installations include several scientific polar investigation stations, a meteorological station, and a radio station. There is a modern airfield at Port Dickson on which nearly 250 aircraft of all types are based. The field has subterranean hangars. Near the port there are many coastal defense and anti-aircraft batteries.

28. Igarka is a semi-river, semi-sea port which relieves Port Dickson of some of its traffic.

29. Taimyrsk lies at the mouth of the Taimyr River and is an entirely new port which was created in or around 1944 by means of considerable technical assistance from, and by the use of the labor of, countless political deportees from the second forbidden zone of the Taimyr Peninsula. It has been conceived as a substitute for Port Dickson, which is considered too well known and too vulnerable.

30. In 1945, traffic circulation had reached only some 60,000 tons. However, the future of Taimyrsk should be a busy one, because the port lies close to a coal field which yielded 60,000 tons in 1945 and which, according to investigations, is capable of yielding ten times that amount. Furthermore, between Taimyrsk and Lake Taimyr, tin and wolfram deposits have been exploited ever since 1930. Thus, Taimyrsk, quite apart from its importance as a coaling station on the Arctic maritime route, could become a large mineral shipping center. Installations include a scientific polar investigation center with 23 sub-stations; an airfield for polar reconnaissance under partial Glavsevmorput control; and a number of barracks and other military buildings, the construction of which was ordered in 1946 by the Soviet Army.

31. Khatanga lies on the Khatanga estuary and is a port of some 7,000 inhabitants, the majority of whom are "liberated" deportees who live in "zemlyanki" (mud huts). The only comfortable buildings in the whole port are those which house the MVD and Glavsevmorput. Port installations are crude; the quays are wooden and of a temporary nature. A small repair yard is in existence. Coal is loaded by hand and is mined nearby at the rate of 25,000 tons a year. Coal production could be increased twenty-fold, and probably will be when the great thermal electric station, under construction since 1944 at a place 29 kilometers outside Khatanga, has been completed. Khatanga is also an oil port which handles a local production of some 100,000 tons a year. There are refineries not far away, and it is believed that Khatanga may develop into the chief air center of the Siberian Far North.

32. Port circulation in 1945 reached only 75,000 tons. In 1946, two icebreakers were stationed permanently in the port, where, during the month of October, traffic was quite heavy. From a purely economic point of view, land and river communications seem of greater importance for this particular region than for the northern sea route. The usual meteorological and polar investigation stations lie further to the north, but there is an airfield of some importance at Khatanga. Within a radius of 50 kilometers of Khatanga there is an important Soviet Army center situated somewhere on the Kheta River. The railway line from Khatanga to Igarka was almost completed in 1946 and should now be in use.

33. Port Tiksi lies on the Siberian mainland in the delta of the Lena River. It has developed in a remarkable fashion since 1938. According to Soviet announcements, between 1940 and 1945 the port was expanded 250%. It lies at the end of two overland routes, one of which follows the course of the Lena. The other runs in a southeasterly direction towards the Indigirka. The population consists of 5,000 free or "liberated" persons. An important MVD/GUMZ center is also situated in the vicinity. Port installations consist of a solid stone quay, a refitting basin, and a dry dock. On hand are materials and facilities for repairing two ships at a time.

34. On one of the adjacent islands in the Lena delta, a base with facilities similar to those of Port Tiksi has been set up for the Soviet Navy, with accomodations for submarines. This naval base is situated seventeen kilometers from Port Tiksi and was entirely built by deportees, the majority of whom died while engaged in the work. The construction of this base was rendered particularly difficult because the ground on these delta islands does not allow for solid constructions, and foundations of cement must always be laid. It is unlikely that this base will be much used, for in the summer of 1945 a submarine sank while trying to enter its shelter.

35. Port Tiksi has a coal depot and automatic coal loading equipment. The installations of the port consist further of two large dredgers. During the month of August 1945, the following vessels circulated in the port:

3 icebreakers permanently stationed there

4 river tugs

1 ocean-going tug

17 small fishing boats

7 cargo vessels, two of which were under repair

4 trawlers

1 warship of 1,300 tons

In addition, a convoy visited Port Tiksi. It consisted of twelve cargo vessels, the largest of which displaced 5,000 tons. The ships were escorted by an icebreaker of 3,000 tons, three gunboats, and a destroyer of 1,100 tons.

36. Port Tiksi is not only an ocean port, but also the last port for whatever limited river traffic passes along the Lena. As a port of call on the Arctic sea route, Port Tiksi is of importance; and, despite unfavorable conditions resulting from the unstable, sandy soil of the Lena delta, it is destined to have a future. Its installations consist of meteorological and polar investigation stations and a radio station. There is an airfield farther to the east which is used by planes on Arctic reconnaissance and by numerous other military aircraft. Port Tiksi is the seat of a coast guard garrison of 150 men and an MVD militia headquarters under GUMZ control which administers a unit of approximately battalion strength. There is only one coastal battery at the port, but it possess a formidable anti-aircraft defense.

37. Since 1944, a naval base and an air base of considerable importance have been under construction on the southern shore of Bolshoi Lyakhov Island. Thousands of deportees from the Kolyma region have been dispatched there.

38. Sukharnoe (marked on some maps as Ambarchik) lies at the mouth of the Kolyma River and has developed in step with the Indigirka-Kolyma region in general. The Russians plan eventually to connect Sukharnoe with the port of Magadan by means of a major highway on which several thousands of deportees are already employed. The Indigirka-Kolyma region is one of the richest in Siberia, producing coal, iron ore, copper, tin, wolfram, nickel, mercury, gold, and radium. The population of Sukharnoe is approximately 15,000, but in the immediate vicinity live some 100,000 political deportees. In addition to the out-of-date installations suitable for local coastal trade, a large stone quay has been erected, along which lie huge warehouses. Sukharnoe has a shipbuilding yard, the dimensions of which could allow for the construction of some fifteen vessels per year, including icebreakers. In 1946, no ships had yet been built there, although five ships were undergoing repairs. Official buildings house a GUMZ directorate and navy, army, and air force command posts.

39. During 1945, port circulation stood at approximately 560,000 tons, involving for the most part traffic to and from the Bering Sea. A naval base is situated nearby on the largest island in the Kolyma estuary. All scientific research stations along the Arctic coast as far as the Bering Sea are controlled by Sukharnoe, which is at the same time a center of coastal defense for northeastern Siberia. The port has an airfield of importance.

40. Nalagan lies to the east of Sukharnoe and is today in the process of becoming an important naval and air base of the Soviet Navy.

41. Since 1945, deportees have been constructing a port of some note at the southern end of Chaun Bay, which is intended to serve a new industrial complex in the hinterland. No further details are available.

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42. Providenie lies on the Bering Straits and has long been an important port of call on the Arctic Sea route. Installations here have remained primitive, although they are well supplied with coal from the Chukotsk Bay region. Most larger ships pass this port without stopping.

43. Anadyr lies at the mouth of the Anadyr River and is tending to replace Providenie as a port of call on the Arctic Sea route. The roadstead is sheltered and affords a favorable anchorage. Coal is mined in the vicinity, and mechanical equipment for loading is available. Installations are otherwise primitive, although repair facilities are available. There are meteorological and polar investigation stations and a radio station at Anadyr, which is also a military base with strong coastal defenses supported by several gunboats of the coastal police. Several icebreakers are permanently stationed at Anadyr. An airfield lies some fifty kilometers upriver from the port.

44. Magadan lies on the northern shore of the Sea of Okhotsk and represents one of the most brilliant Soviet achievements. A simple fishing village in 1930, it is today a modern port of more than 100,000 inhabitants and the headquarters of the administration of the whole region and of the NVD/GUMZ Dalstroi directorate-general. All the most modern port installations, including shipbuilding yards, are available at Magadan, which is capable of handling traffic of over two million tons a year (although in 1945 traffic did not exceed 800,000 tons). Both land and sea communications from Magadan are excellent.